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THE OBSERVATOR.

Remarks on the pretended new Prophets. A remarkable Story of Peoples being under a ſtrange Deluſion in Fero *Iſlands, belonging to the King of* Denmark. *A Caution to Magiſtrates, againſt raſhly diſcharging People committed as lewd Vagrants. Mr.* William Brown, *the Merchant in* Crutched-Fryars, *and Mr.* John Crookſhanks, *Comptroller of the Cuſtoms in* Scotland, *not the* Brown *and* Crookſhanks *mention'd in* Gregg's *Examination. A Caution againſt bringing innocent, eſpecially if Great Men, under Suſpicion, on the preſent Occaſion.*

From Saturday, April 17. to Wednesday, April 21. 1708.

Country-m. I Am importun'd by ſeveral Gentlemen, Maſter, to ſpeak to you to give your Opinion of the pretended new Prophets, that have made ſuch a Noiſe among us.

Obſ. I am *neither Prophet, nor Son of a Prophet, Roger,* and therefore wiſh they had importun'd ſome other Body; but I am ready, at any Time, to give my Opinion, where I judge it may be of Uſe.

Country-m. Then pray, Maſter, ſay ſomething upon the Subject; for 'tis expected from you.

Obſ. If it be ſo, *Roger,* my Opinion, is, in a few Words, that the pretended new Prophets, are under a terrible Deluſion; and my Reaſons in Brief, are, 1. Becauſe they have deſerted the publick Ordinances of the Goſpel. 2. Becauſe the general Tendency of ſuch of their Writings as I have ſeen, is to create a Diſeſteem of all the Miniſters of God's Word, by uncharitable Reflections, as if they were meer Traders in Divinity; tho' it be evident, that many of the ſeveral Denominations among us, are faithful and ſincere in the Diſcharge of their Duty. 3. Becauſe thoſe Pretenders to Propheſy, have fail'd ſo often already in their Predictions, as is evident to any Man who peruſes their Writings: And this, *Roger,* is a Mark given us by God himſelf, to know falſe Prophets by, *Deuteronomy* xviii. 21, 22. *If thou ſay in thine Heart, how ſhall we know the Word which the Lord hath not ſpoken? When a Prophet ſpeaketh in the Name of the Lord, if the Thing follow not, nor come to paſs, that is the Thing which the Lord hath not ſpoken; but the Prophet hath ſpoken it preſumptuouſly: Thou ſhalt not be afraid of him.*

Country-m. But Sir *Richard Bulkeley* anſwers this Objection in his Book, *pag.* 75. and onward.

Obſ. What God ſays, *Roger,* cannot be contradicted; and the Meaning of the Words is ſo plain here, that the Senſe of them admit of no Diſpute; ſo that Men may diſtinguiſh as they pleaſe, but the Thing carries its own Reaſon with it: The Spirit of God cannot lie; but we may ſave our Selves the Trouble of uſing many Words about this Matter, ſince the Time of that Event about Mr. *Emes*'s Reſurrection, which Sir *Richard* owns to be deciſive, is ſo near at Hand. In the mean Time, *Roger,* I wiſh thoſe Gentlemen would read the following Story of one *Jacob Oluffſon,* at *Giow* in *Oſteroe,* one of the Iſlands of *Fero,* belonging to the King of *Denmark,* in the Deſcription of that Country, writ by the Provoſt of the Churches; for perhaps there are few Inſtances, wherein *Satan* acted more at firſt under Diſguiſe of an Angel of Light.

The Story is thus: *pag.* 385, *&c.*

'On the 20th of *January,* 1667. a Man came to 'Oluffſon as he was ſick a Bed, in ſhining Cloaths, 'which fill'd the Room with Splendor; and after 'ſaluting him, ſtrok'd him round his Breaſt with 'his Hand, and cur'd him; then he taught him 'the following Prayer, which he order'd him to 'ſay three times every Day.

'*O thou worthy holy Ghoſt, Comforter of all Sorrowful and Afflicted; thou knoweſt beſt what our Fleſh and Blood can ſuffer in the Croſs, where it goeth but ſadly with us, except we receive Help from another Place, than from our Selves. Be thou therefore my Comforter, and my Shield; ſtrengthen me by thy Power, help me in my great Infirmity, and aſſiſt me, chear up my Heart and Mind, that I may call and cry unto thee, for Help in my Neceſſity: Strengthen my Faith, that I, with a firm Expectation and Aſſurance, may expect Help and Council from above: Give me Grace, that I may ſuffer with Patience thy Fatherly Rod; and do not with Murmuring and Impatience, offend thee. Since we know not in our Croſs, what we ſhould pray for, and deſire, do thou the beſt, and pray in us: Thou, who, with the Father and the Son, ar't an Almighty God to all Eternity.* Amen.

'He afterwards order'd the young Man to ſay this Prayer the firſt Time he came to Church, kneeling on the Threſhold, with his Face from the Church; and that the People of the Country ſhould ſay the ſame, with their Hands join'd, and Knees bow'd, thrice every Day; and ſo the Lord would turn away the Puniſhment which threaten'd them. He commanded him likewiſe to admoniſh the People to convert themſelves, to deſiſt from Curſing, Swearing, and all other Sins, and ſo God would appeaſe his Anger. Then he bid him riſe ſound, and ſin no more, and went away thro' the Hole in the Roof. Five Days after, he appear'd again to him, about Break of Day, as he was in Bed, and ſung the 23d Pſalm. Then the young Man apprehending, that one bid him go out, tho' he ſaw nothing, he dreſs'd himſelf, and went out, and ſaw in the S. S. W. the Heavens open, and one coming down from thence, who preſently ſtood by him in a Prieſt's Habit, that reach'd to his Feet, being red and white, with a red Croſs on his Back, told him he ſhould not doubt but he came from God; and leaving him haſtily, aſcended from whence he came. The 27th of *January* he came to him again thro' the Roof, as he lay awake, in the ſame Form as at firſt, ask'd him, *If he had publiſh'd what he commanded him?* The young Man anſwer'd, *Yes:* To which the Apparition reply'd, *But not ſo earneſtly as he ought.* Then he ask'd, *If he had not ſeen ſome Signs in the Heavens?* The young Man anſwer'd, *No:* But others ſaid, *They had ſeen two Suns:* To which the Spectre reply'd, *They were not Suns, tho' they ſeem'd ſo; but a Sign, that they ſhould begin to keep Holy Day, from the Time they ſaw the true Sun ariſe, which was on* Saturday *at half an Hour paſt* 12 *in the Afternoon; and that the Sermon which they preach'd on* Sunday, *ſhould be preach'd on* Saturday *in the Afternoon; and that when they row'd out, they ſhould ſing the* 23d *Pſalm.* Then he went out at the Roof, as before. He return'd on the 28th, as the young Man lay awake, and told him, *He was St.* John, *who lay in the Boſom of* Jeſus, *at the Lord's Supper:* And then vaniſh'd as formerly. He came to him the fifth Time, in the Night, and ask'd him, *If he had declar'd to the Prieſt, what he commanded him?* The young Man told him, *He had; and that the Prieſt thought it ſtrange, he ſhould appear to him, who was*

'*was so great a Sinner*'. The Spectre answer'd, *That* '*the Lord had given many Signs, and still gives many,* '*that are not manifest.*

'These Things being publick in the Country, 'many of the simple People put great Faith in them, 'whereupon the Author sent for the young Man, 'examin'd him, and admonish'd him to have no-'thing to do with such Fictions; but he persisted 'to affirm they were true.

'This Fame spread over all the Islands, the com-'mon People gave great Credit to him, and in ma-'ny Places began to keep *Saturday* holy; invented 'many other Visions, and spread them thro' the 'Country; alledging, that as God had enlighten'd 'some poor Fisher-men, he could also enlighten 'this simple Man; and would make Apostles of 'Angels, and Spirits to preach unto Men. They 'added, that the Devil could not take the Shape 'of an Angel, do any Good, or speak a true or 'good Word; and therefore concluded, that the 'Sanctification of the *Saturday*, was commanded by 'God. This they pretended to maintain against 'their Teachers; alledging, that to pray, and to 'keep a Day holy, was a good Act, and that none 'could blame, or forbid it. Thus many People 'were seduc'd; but at last it happen'd, that this 'Man, by the Temptation of that Spirit, commit-'ted Fornication; and being censur'd for it by 'the Church, and the People, on that Occasion, 'warn'd to beware of such Errors, there was an 'End put to the spreading of those Delusions.

Country-m. That's a very strange Story indeed, Master, that *Satan* should so far transform himself into an Angel of Light, as to cure the young Man of his Distemper; to teach him a Form of Prayer, wherein one God and three Persons are so plainly own'd! And that he should likewise order him to teach the People to be devout, and reform their Lives! All this look'd with so good an Aspect, that it was no Wonder the poor People should be deluded by it. It is also observable, Master, that as the Seducer led them into Superstition, he crea-ted in them a Disesteem for their Ministers, and concluded the Scene by Uncleanness. I hope this may be a Caveat for our new Prophets, and their Followers: And I wish also, it may serve as a Warning to any Magistrates among us, that are too ready to discharge lewd Vagrants, who are committed by other Magistrates, without first con-sulting those by whose Order they were committed.

Obs. Why, *Roger*, I hope we have no Magistrates, who proceed with so little Caution within the Bills of Mortality, where lewd Persons do so much Mischief, both to the Bodies and Souls of People of both Sexes.

Country-m. I wish there were none such, Master; but I am inform'd there are, and therefore was de-sir'd to speak to you, to give them a Caution.

Obs. That I shall do, *Roger*, in a few Words; which is, that I would advise all Magistrates to ob-serve that prudent Method which I hear is observ'd among the Justices of *Surry*, *viz.* Not to discharge any such Person committed by another Justice, if that Justice be in the Way, without first consulting him. 2. That they should be cautious of admit-ting the Testimony of such as keep publick Houses, in Behalf of such Persons as are committed as lewd Vagrants. 3. That they beware of being impos'd upon by their own Clerks, who too frequently take Bribes, to procure the Enlargement of such Persons. 4. That they beware of entertaining Prejudices a-gainst those of the Societies of Reformation, and such as they employ for suppressing Immorality; which they do at their own proper Charge, for which they can expect nothing, but Obloquy and Reproach from loose People, tho' they have the Approbation of God, of good Men, and of their own Conscience.

Country-m. I am also desir'd to acquaint you, Master, that some People have been so malicious and weak, as to cast a Slander upon Mr. *William Brown*, an eminent Merchant in *Crutched-Fryars*, and *John Crookshanks*, Esq; Comptroller General of the Customs in *North Britain*, as if they were the *Brown* and *Crookshanks* mention'd in the Examination of *Gregg*, in the Report of the Lords, pag. 7. where *Brown*, a Merchant, Father-in-Law to one *Crookshanks*, and the said *Crookshanks* are mention'd to have agreed to give *Gregg* 200 *l.* to procure a *French* Pass, that *Crookshanks* might go free of *French* Privateers with his Ship to the *English* Plantations; and to whom *Gregg* read the Extracts of *Tallard*'s and *Robineau*'s Let-ters: Whereas *Brown* mention'd there, is one Capt. *Peregrine Brown*, who lives near *Aldgate*; and *Crook-shanks* there mention'd, is his Son-in-Law; but neither of 'em are so much as known to Mr. *William Brown*, the Merchant in *Crutched-Fryars*, nor to Mr. *John Crookshanks*, Comptroller of the Customs in *Scotland*.

Obs. I heard of that Matter before, *Roger*; and having consulted those, who know the said Mr. *William Brown*, and Mr. *John Crookshanks*, am satis-fy'd, those two Gentlemen are very much injur'd by the Wickedness of some, and the Weakness of others; and that they are Persons of an extraordi-nary good Character, and of as unquestionable Loyalty, as any in the Kingdom. But I heartily wish, *Roger*, there may be no other innocent Gen-tlemen wrong'd, on the Occasion of the late At-tempt upon us, and that party and personal Pique may not have a Hand in charging guiltless Persons with Suspicion; which may have ill Consequences, especially if any Great Men be thus unjustly treat-ed; for that's the ready Way of Friends to make them Enemies; as *Tacitus* tells us, *Getulius* wrote to *Tiberius*, *That he was loyal, and unless he was suspected, and ill us'd, would continue so.* But more of this a-nother Time, *Roger*.

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